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Catholic Principle

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—*Ezekiel XXXVII:3*

A SERMON PREACHED AT  
ST. MARY'S, ASHEVILLE, N. C.  
ON THE SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY,  
A. D. 1915, BY THE  
REVEREND CHARLES MERCER HALL, M. A.,  
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## DR. PUSEY AND THE CATHOLIC REVIVAL

"In the deep, calm, meditative saintliness of the soul of Edward Bouverie Pusey, Doctor of the Catholic Church and Confessor, Almighty God set the seal and stamp of the purpose and sent also the spirit and power of the great movement, which, issuing forth from that spring, has roused Christendom, revived the Church and revolutionized society."—The late William Croswell Doane, Bishop of Albany.

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"Let us remember that it is of the essence of all acceptable worship (for God will only be worshipped in spirit and in truth) that it should rightly express the Catholic Faith."—Pastoral Letter of the House of Bishops, A.D. 1895.

# Catholic Principles

We have just been celebrating our first birthday as a Parish. A year ago last Sunday we made a beginning as a congregation, in our first Corporate Communion. I wonder if many thought of a certain resemblance between the birth of the Pentecostal Church in Jerusalem in an upper room, and that first service, in the hired room in the Manor Club House? They were both small beginnings. The grain of mustard seed became a mighty tree, the leaves of which are for the healing of the nations. A year ago this little parish had just been born; today it is but a little one. Two of our number have already gone to form a St. Mary's congregation in the Land of Green Pastures, and we trust already listen to the song of Moses and the Lamb. Yet again today we gather in this beautiful little House of God to give thanks for God's great goodness to us, and to offer up our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving. We think how wonderful it has all been; how much has been accomplished already; how much more there is yet to do. And we hear the voice of God speaking to us, saying, "Speak unto the children of Israel that they go forward."

Happy indeed are you, great indeed is your privilege, large your opportunity. You are living in the days of the Renaissance of our beloved Church. Let us spend our time this morning in retrospect.

In Colonial days the Church in England was in a very low spiritual condition. In New England she had to maintain her place against the fierce prejudices of the Puritans. She was thereby forced, as we need to be forced in this Southland, to take a fuller grasp of Church principles and Church life. On the contrary in Virginia, where nearly everybody was "conservative," the Virginians held on to the Church as *they* had received it. Until after the Revolution the Church in the American colonies was under the jurisdiction of the Bishop of London,



who never visited them. The clergy of Connecticut, New Jersey and New York especially desired the Episcopate as essential to the preservation of the Church. But this was not secured without meeting violent opposition and attack, not only by sectarians, but even by those in the Church who opposed the idea of Episcopal rule.

From the days of Constantine, Church and State had been united. But the American Church was to be free, and her Bishops not appointed by the State, but elected by the clergy and laity in synod assembled. We have indeed a vestige of the old way surviving in our present provision for the election of Missionary Bishops by the House of Bishops. That is one reason why we are anxious to see all our Missionary Districts become dioceses. In a diocese, (a "Missionary District" is an anomaly), the rights of Bishop and clergy and laity are afforded equal recognition. A Bishop is a constitutional officer, not an autocrat, he is not vested with the authority of a Pope, and any attempt on his part to assume unconstitutional prerogatives should be vigorously resisted. The Standing Committee elected by the convention or synod of a diocese, forms the balance wheel of diocesan organization. In a Missionary District, as someone said in our recent Convention, "the Bishop is an autocrat." He can veto or ignore the action of both his Council of Advice and Synod, if he so chooses. Yet few Bishops could have the temerity to ignore the wishes of their Synod duly expressed.

The Episcopate for America was at length obtained by the consecration of Dr. Samuel Seabury, by the Scottish Bishops, on November 14, 1784, at Aberdeen, Scotland.

Our first American Prayer Book had several blemishes. Bishop Seabury said that he left it to men of another generation who were to come after him, to restore the losses in the Offices. Some of these blemishes have been done away. To Dr. Seabury we owe the liturgical beauty of the Prayer



of Consecration or Canon, in the Communion Office; it will ever be a monument to his wisdom and piety.

The great Revival of the Nineteenth Century, begun at Oxford in 1833, when John Keble preached his famous Assize Sermon, began quite independently here in America. The second Dr. Samuel Seabury, John Henry Hobart, Milo Mahan and others laid the foundations of the Oxford (later called the Catholic) Movement, or so-called Renaissance, in America. Here, as in England, that Movement met with fierce opposition. The Evangelical, or Low Church Party, had lost much of its early fervor: (in 1890, Professor Cady of the General Theological Seminary told me it was dead). The theological system that taught that grace was given through the sacraments was taken to be in opposition to the Evangelical doctrine, that man was justified by faith, or simply trust, in the merits of Christ. Perhaps rightly understood these two ideas were not really contradictory, but supplementary of each other. Christianity has, what we call, its objective and its subjective side. Sacraments are means through which Christ acts and bestows his gifts. Faith and repentance are the subjective and necessary conditions for their profitable reception. The controversy in England and America, for a time, waxed fierce and warm. The contest raged about the doctrine of Apostolical Succession and the Remission of sins in Baptism. We have to thank God that in our American Prayer Book it is declared that God has "promised to be with the Ministers of Apostolic Succession to the end of the world." Study the various parts of your Prayer Book. So, too, in our Baptismal Office the Doctrine of Baptismal Regeneration is clearly affirmed. The sixth chapter of St. John, fairly interpreted, gives us the Scriptural authority for the doctrine of the Real Presence of Christ in the Holy Eucharist: and the New Birth from above was

ever associated, in Holy Scripture, with the one act of water and the Spirit.

There was connected with these teachings an improvement in the arrangement of our churches and some ceremonial details, in the way of restoration. As a little boy, my first recollections of a church are of sitting at my mother's feet on a comfortable hassock in an old fashioned box pew, with much higher sides than those in old St. Michael's, Charleston. In front of me towered the ancient "three-decker" pulpit. At the lowest desk sat the clerk, who bawled out the responses; at the second story stood the Priest, in surplice and black stole (I was told that this was a relic of the time when the English went into mourning for the death of Charles I!) A little later, after retiring for a space to the Vestry, the preacher emerged clothed in a black Geneva gown and bands, and sometimes wearing lavender or black gloves, ascended to the third level of the "three-decker" to deliver his ponderous discourse. It is difficult to believe that when this order began to change, it caused in England what were known as the Surplice riots, and brought forth Episcopal fulminations. The Altar or Holy Table, in many places, was a four-legged library table, often used as a repository for nondescript articles, which stood immediately in front of the pulpit.

The Southern dioceses, where the Colonial Church had been strongest, suffered most severely from the Revolution. Their lands were taken away, their churches destroyed; communion plate disappeared, and fonts were used for watering troughs. Is it any wonder that the idea of worship was nearly lost?

And in Massachusetts strange things happened. Bishop Eastburn declined to visit the Church of the Advent because there was a cross on the wall over the altar, flowers were at times placed on the altar, and the prayers were said choir-wise. On one

occasion when the Priest, Dr. Edson, began to say the prayers in that position, in the presence of the Bishop, that prelate actually rose from his knees, and going to him took him by the shoulders and forced him to turn about with his face to the people! Bishop McIlvaine of Ohio forbade any altar with a solid or closed front. Bishop Whittle of Virginia would not allow flowers on the Holy Table; and many another Bishop, by many arbitrary and unconstitutional acts, made life miserable for one or more of his clergy. Indeed such inconceivable narrowness is not yet entirely a memory of distant days. But Bishop Horatio Potter of New York once said, that one might as well try to sweep back the ocean with a broom, as to stop the advance of the great Movement for which St. Mary's, its priest, its vestry, its congregation stands.

In 1844, the General Convention was stirred up to take action and to endeavor to deal with the Tractarian Movement. But as another Bishop has said, you could as little check its onward career by resolution as you could by addressing a series of them to an advancing locomotive, stop its progress. In spite of the unfortunate defection of Newman in Europe, and of Bishop Ives in 1852, in North Carolina, the Movement kept on spreading like oil upon the waters.

Early in the fifties, Bishop Eastburn of Massachusetts, presented Father Prescott, an assistant at the Church of the Advent for trial. It was proved that Father Prescott had offered to hear confessions privately and to give Absolution, and that in a sermon he had spoken of the Blessed Virgin as "the Sinless Mother of a Sinless Child." After some years a conclusion was reached that this phrase did not necessarily involve erroneous doctrine. But—remember this was over fifty years ago—it was adjudged that Father Prescott must agree that he would not preach Confession, and that until he so agreed he should be suspended from the Ministry!

Today such a finding would be impossible. The trial instead of putting an end to such teaching, served like the wind of God, to fan the new impulse given to Catholic doctrine and principles into a flame. Bishop Whittingham of Maryland invited Father Prescott into his diocese and said that what a Bishop could do, a Bishop could undo, and he released Father Prescott from any obligations to obey the decision of the Court in his diocese. Y

In England a contest arose over the doctrine of the Real Presence. The Rev. W. J. E. Bennett taught that in the Sacrament there was an actual presence of the true Body and Blood of the Lord. It was there by virtue of the consecration, and extended to the communicant, and separately from the act of reception. He held that the Communion Table was also an Altar of Sacrifice, and that Adoration was due to our Lord in the Sacrament, on the ground that under the veil of bread and wine our Lord was really present. The English Privy Council declared this not to be contrary to the Church's allowed teaching. The sainted John Keble's book on "Eucharistical Adoration" is an English classic.

The same doctrine was taught in America. Dr. Samuel F. Jarvis of Connecticut, in a note to a famous sermon preached in 1836, before the Board of Missions, used these words: "We have no right to banish from our Communion those whose notions of the real presence of Christ in the Sacrament rise to a mysterious change by which the very elements themselves, though they retain their original properties, are corporeally united with, or transformed into, Christ."

Bishop Whittingham taught that "one ought to go to the death for the doctrine of the Real Presence." X.

Later a controversy arose between Dr. Craik of Kentucky and Dr. James deKoven of Racine, who maintained the fact of the Real Presence, but would +

Bishop Whittingham 8  
was of the greatest Bishop

not define the mode. It was thought by many that Dr. deKoven gained the victory in the controversy; and although later he was denied a Bishopric, in 1874 he again defended this vital doctrine in the face of the General Convention, and won forever the right of our clergy to teach it unflinchingly.

The Prayer Book really teaches the doctrines of the Catholic Faith. The old time low churchman and the modern broad churchman alike have tried to get rid of them, and to change the Prayer book so as to eliminate its Catholic character. Seeking fatuity, Dr. Cummins and others left the Church in 1874, to found the "Reformed Episcopal Church," which is now dying a natural death.

The renewed teachings of the doctrines of the Church resulted, naturally, in a development of ceremonial in the public services. The science of Ritual came to be more generally studied and its principles carried out in practice. The unfortunate relation of Church and State in England made many of the clergy amenable to the Civil Law, and many a priest was not only deprived of his benefice, but was sent to jail. Archdeacon Denison of Taunton was condemned in 1856, after a trial lasting three months. The Rev. Arthur Tooth of St. James, Hatcham, the Rev. R. W. Enraght of Bordesley, the Rev. Sidney Fairthorne Green of St. John's, Miles Platting, and the Rev. James Bell-Cox, Vicar of St. Margaret's, Liverpool, were all imprisoned. These cruel acts taught the English nation and the English Church a lesson, "sacrifice alone is fruitful." The so-called Ritualistic Movement has made steady progress. Opposition has been a fructifying force. A canon passed by our Church essaying to prevent certain ritual acts, was not worth the paper it was written on, and only a few years ago, in 1903, was expunged from our Code as futile and unconstitutional. It was unconstitutional because the Church's Prayer Book and the Church's worship cannot be regulated by Canon. Neither

can these things be regulated by Pastoral Letters, which can never have the force of Liturgical enactments.

We think of the Church as it was 80-50-30 years ago. We think of the old days when our churches were closed from Sunday to Sunday, when the Holy Communion was celebrated every three months, when Holy Days passed year after year unobserved, and when there was nothing of the beauty of holiness to be seen, and we hear the words of the Prophet, "can these dry bones live?"

And then we look at the Church today, at the wonderful revival of the missionary spirit, at our open churches, at the unconscious leveling of nearly all public services with an increase of liturgical, ceremonial, ritualistic development of decent order, and we find our answer. We look about us and we praise God for the revival of the Religious Life in our Church, for the Orders of men and women who are living a dedicated life in convents, and community houses. We picture the churches we attended in our childhood and then right here in Asheville we find ourselves in a chapel like St. Mary's, and participating in a service, modest and unfinished as it is, and yet, such as it is, one that three years ago would have been thought an impossibility, and we say, Thanks be to God!

And all this—what is it for? That we may better sanctify the Lord God in our hearts. That we may in all things give God the glory. That we may be better men and better women, loving, hospitable, kind, courteous, compassionate, forgiving, without malice or hatred in our hearts; generous—yes, lavish in our generosity, for what can we give to Him who has given us so much? This is our ideal for St. Mary's—a congregation of God's people. A church with open doors and free seats for all; a church of zealous worshippers, of charitable and serviceable men and women; one that takes care of its children and never neglects its poor—any poor



man; whose people shall be much more occupied in looking out for their own souls than in attacking the faith of their neighbors. A church which shall combine in its mode of worship two qualities—taste and refinement which the educated require, just as much in their churches as elsewhere, and the air of stateliness, almost of pomp, which shall impress the common worshiper, and is not without its effect even upon those who think they hold outward form as of little value.

Our work has only just begun. Pray for holy wisdom. Pray for patience. Pray for zeal. Pray for the spirit of sacrifice. If we are true to Catholic principles we have nothing to fear. If we are hedged with thorns, it is that we may better find and better love the Divine Lover of souls. And if days of trial come upon us, and the Church has yet to pass through affliction, let us remember the glorious words; "I will allure her and bring her into the wilderness and will speak comfortably to her. I will give her vineyards from thence, and a valley of Achor for a door of hope; and she shall sing there as in the days of her youth." Sing what? The glorious love song of the Bridegroom and the Bride: God will say—"My people" and we shall say "My God."

"O pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee!"



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